

## GROWTH MANAGEMENT LITIGATION REPORT

TO: Board of County Commissioners  
Richard Collins  
County Attorney  
Timothy McGarry  
Director, Growth Management Division  
Thomas J. Willi  
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FROM: Derek Howard, Esq.  
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DATE: December 7, 2005

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### Vacation Rentals

**Neumont (Federal Class Action)** – Plaintiffs filed a class action suit in U.S. District Court alleging vacation rental ordinance (Ordinance 004-1997) was prematurely enforced, is an unconstitutional taking of their properties, and was adopted in violation of due process. On June 20, 2004, the U.S. District Court entered final judgment in favor of the County. On July 15, 2004, Plaintiffs/Appellants filed a notice of appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit from final judgment of the District Court, and all interlocutory orders giving rise to the judgment. On September 15, 2004, Appellants filed a motion to certify state-law questions to the Florida Supreme Court and to postpone briefing pending certification; the County filed its response on October 7; Appellants filed a reply on October 15, 2004. On October 18, 2004, a mediation conference was held. On October 19, 2004, the Court denied Appellants' motion to stay briefing and ruled motion to certify state-law questions to the Florida Supreme Court is carried with the case. Appellants filed their initial brief on December 15, 2004, Monroe County filed its response brief on February 22, 2005. Appellants filed their reply brief on March 11, 2005. On April 7, 2005, Monroe County filed a motion for leave to file a surreply brief in response to Appellants' new argument relating to the Class Action Fairness Act of 2005. On April 21, 2005, Appellants filed their response to Monroe County's motion, which included a declaration of a local property manager offered as support for Appellants' assertion that a majority of the subject class members are out-of-state residents. On April 27, 2005, Monroe County filed a motion to strike the declaration, which was denied on May 25, 2005. On May 2, 2005, the Court entered an order granting Monroe County's motion for leave to file a surreply brief; brief was filed on May 24, 2005. Oral argument was heard on November 18, 2005. The parties are awaiting the Court's decision. (\$123,593.99 as of October 31, 2005).

### Takings Claims

**Ambrose** - Declaratory action claiming vested rights under §380.05(18) based on filing of subdivision plats. Pursuant to summary judgment proceedings and his previous orders, Judge Payne ordered that Plaintiffs prove ownership of a single Plaintiffs' lot so that legal issues may be appealed rather than spend extensive time in trial court litigating ownership issues as to each lot at issue. Various

environmental groups were also granted leave to intervene. Court entered final summary judgment for approximately 75 Plaintiffs. Defendants appealed final Order. Third District reversed, holding that vesting is not established by mere recording of plats; statute requires showing of reliance and change of position to establish vesting. Plaintiffs' motion for rehearing was denied on February 18, 2004. On March 18, 2004, Plaintiffs/Petitioners filed a notice to invoke the discretionary jurisdiction of the Florida Supreme Court. On July 9, 2004, the Florida Supreme Court denied Plaintiffs/Petitioners' petition for review. On July 14, 2005, DCA filed a motion to dismiss the circuit court action for failure to prosecute; Monroe County joined in the motion. (\$30,960.98 as of October 31, 2005).

**Emmert** - Complaint seeking inverse condemnation based on application of Monroe County's wetland regulations. Plaintiffs allege that Monroe County has deprived them of all economic use of their property, despite the fact that they were granted partial beneficial use from the subject regulations, which expanded the buildable area of their vacant Ocean Reef lot from approximately 1,800 to 2,500 square feet. Plaintiffs argue that their ability to build within this area is encumbered by Ocean Reef Club Association deed restrictions requiring setbacks in excess of those required by Monroe County. Monroe County's motion to dismiss was denied on December 12, 2002. Mediation was held on October 21, 2004. Case was set for bench trial on November 29, 2004. On November 22, 2004, Plaintiffs filed an emergency motion for continuance; motion was heard and granted on November 24, 2004. On November 22, 2004, Plaintiffs also filed a motion for leave to file a second amended complaint in order to add a claim for injunctive relief based on vested rights. The motion was heard on January 5, 2005. On March 10, 2005, the court entered an order granting Plaintiffs' motion for leave to file a second amended complaint; the complaint was filed on March 31, 2005. On March 31, 2005, Plaintiffs also moved for the entry of default judgment against the County for failure to file an answer to the second amended complaint (despite the fact that the second amended complaint was not previously filed); the County moved to strike Plaintiffs' motion on April 4, 2005. The County timely filed its answer to the second amended complaint on April 8, 2005. On May 3, 2005, Plaintiffs filed a motion for partial summary judgment directed to their injunctive relief/vested rights claim (Count I). Plaintiffs' motion was heard on September 15, 2005; on October 22, 2005, the Court entered an order denying Plaintiffs' motion. On November 17, 2005, Monroe County filed a motion for partial summary judgment directed to the injunctive relief/vested rights count. At a hearing on December 1, 2005, the Court granted that motion while granting Plaintiffs leave to amend their complaint to add a count for declaratory relief. The court also granted Plaintiffs' motion to continue the trial that was set for the two (2) week trial period beginning December 19, 2005. (\$94,248.550.56 as of October 31, 2005).

**Galleon Bay** - Three cases: (1) appeal of vested rights decision; (2) takings claim; and (3) third party complaint against the State of Florida seeking contribution, indemnity and subrogation.

(1) On June 17, 2004, the 3rd D.C.A. denied the County's petition for writ of certiorari.

(2) As to the takings claim, Judge Payne entered summary judgment in favor of Plaintiff on November 10, 2003. The order of the court found that a temporary taking began on April 21, 1994, and would cease on the date of the jury verdict, at which time a permanent taking would arise. The case was scheduled to proceed with a jury trial as to damages on August 9, 2004. At the pretrial conference on July 26, 2004, however, Judge Payne agreed to modify his order on liability to find only a permanent taking on April 21, 1994, and granted Plaintiff's request to continue the trial until October 12, 2004. Plaintiff's counsel was delegated the task of reducing the Court's announced ruling to a proposed modified order. On August 18, 2004, Judge Payne entered final judgment in favor of the County as to

Plaintiff Hannelore Schleu. On September 24, 2004, the County submitted a proposed modified order consistent with the Court's July 26, 2004, ruling. On October 3, 2004, Plaintiff submitted a proposed modified order that substantively contradicted and strayed from the Court's ruling; namely, the proposed order found that a temporary taking occurred on April 13, 1997. On October 4, 2004, the Court entered verbatim Plaintiff's proposed modified order. The trial was subsequently continued until February 7, 2005.

On November 29, 2004, the County filed an amended motion for rehearing and/or motion for reconsideration arguing, *inter alia*, the verbatim entry of Plaintiff's proposed modified order violated its procedural due process rights. On December 13, 2004, the Court granted the County's motion and vacated the modified order of October 4, 2004. On December 27, 2004, the Court entered its Order for Nonbinding Arbitration.

On May 5-6, 2005, the parties (including Third-Party Defendant State of Florida) participated in nonbinding arbitration before Gerald Kogan, Esq., a former member of the Florida Supreme Court. The issues arbitrated included (1) whether the taking found to have occurred by the trial court was permanent or temporary (or both); (2) the applicable measure of damages for the taking; and (3) whether Monroe County is entitled to a contribution from the State as to all or a portion of the just compensation that Plaintiff is owed for the taking. The issue of liability was not arbitrated, pursuant to the trial court's arbitration order. On June 3, 2005, Kogan rendered his decision, substantially finding in favor of Monroe County on all of the issues arbitrated. Kogan rejected Plaintiff's "two-takings" theory of recovery, finding that there has only been a permanent taking for which Plaintiff is entitled to the fair market value of the property on the date of the taking, plus simple interest at the statutory rate until the compensation is paid, as just compensation (Plaintiff argued that it was entitled to rebut the statutory rates with other rates of return that it could have achieved through selective investments, and that the rate of return is applied on a compound basis). Kogan also found that Monroe County is entitled to a 50% contribution from the State as to compensation owed to Plaintiff. On June 6, 2005, Plaintiff rejected the arbitrator's proposed award and moved for an order setting the case for trial.

Prior to the arbitration proceeding, Plaintiff filed a motion to amend the summary judgment order of November 10, 2003, and notice of confession of error (seeking to change the taking date of April 21, 1994, to April 13, 1997). Thus, all the parties now agree that there was no taking on April 21, 1994. The State filed its response to Plaintiff's motion to amend on May 18, 2005. The County filed its response to Plaintiff's motion on June 20, 2005. At a hearing on June 21, 2004, the Court ruled that it would rehear all issues of liability, notwithstanding its prior decisions, and set September 19, 2005, as the deadline for the filing of any amended or supplemental summary judgment motions (order entered on September 16, 2005). Upon motion to the court, the filing deadline for Monroe County was extended until October 4, 2005. On September 9, 2005, Monroe County filed a motion to vacate the summary judgment order of November 10, 2003, which remains pending. On July 18, 2005, the State filed answers to the County's third party complaint and to Plaintiff's second amended complaint. On September 26, 2005, the State served its motion for summary judgment. Plaintiff did not file an amended or supplemental summary judgment motion by the deadline set for such motions, nor did it request an extension of time to do so. On September 30, 2005, Plaintiff served a "Motion for Leave to Serve and File Motion Late," seeking to file another "Motion to Amend the Court's Prior Liability Order," which alleges that a taking occurred on July 19, 2001 (not April 13, 1997, as alleged in previous motion to amend). On October 4, 2005, Monroe County served its Cross-Motion for Summary Judgment and Memorandum of Law. All pending motions were scheduled to be heard on October 24,

2005, but the hearing was cancelled due to hurricane Wilma; the hearing has been rescheduled for January 30, 2006.

(3) As to the third party complaint against the State of Florida, the State moved to dismiss for failure to state a cause of action, as well as a motion to transfer action to the Second Judicial Circuit in and for Leon County, Florida. On May 24, 2004, the court denied the State's motion to dismiss as to the County's claim of contribution, as well as the State's motion to transfer. On May 24, 2004, the State moved to substitute the Department of Community Affairs and the Administration Commission as third party defendants. On July 27, 2004, the State filed a notice of appeal to the 3rd D.C.A. of the non-final order denying the motion to transfer venue (Case No. 3D04-2036) and petition for writ of prohibition/certiorari (Case No. 3D04-1920). On August 24, 2004, the Court granted County's motion to hold appeal in abeyance. On August 25, 2004, the Court denied County's motion to hold petition in abeyance. The Court deferred the deadline for the County to file its response, pending resolution of matters in the underlying action. On July 18, 2005, the State filed motions to dismiss both the petition for writ of prohibition/certiorari and the appeal. On August 30, 2005, the Court entered an order granting the State's motion to dismiss the appeal. On September 2, 2005, the Court entered an order granting the State's motion to dismiss the petition for writ of prohibition. (\$221,709.88 as of October 31, 2005; does not include prior Galleon Bay matters).

**Good** – On August 13, 2001, Plaintiff filed a complaint against Monroe County seeking declaratory judgment that he be awarded "economically viable uses" as to his Suburban Commercial and Destination Resort-zoned properties on Lower Sugarloaf Key, as well as declaratory judgment "that the existing nonresidential moratorium be declared unlawful" (despite fact that moratorium ended with the adoption of NROGO). Plaintiff also sought damages for inverse condemnation based on the application of Monroe County's non-residential development moratorium and regulations. In a separate proceeding, Plaintiff is pursuing a claim under the Bert Harris Act. On August 27, 2001, Monroe County filed a motion to dismiss Plaintiff's first complaint; the motion was denied on October 29, 2001. On May 12, 2003, Plaintiff filed an amended complaint. On June 6, 2003, Monroe County filed a motion to dismiss the amended complaint. On June 23, 2003, the Court entered an order that stated the County's motion to dismiss was under advisement, and held case in abeyance until Plaintiff obtained a letter of understanding as to the permissible uses available on the subject parcels. On March 7, 2005, the County issued a letter addressing the proposed development of Tracts A and B (property S. of U.S. 1). On July 25, 2005, the County issued another letter addressing the remaining subject parcels. A case management conference was held on August 1, 2005, at which the Court reinstated the case. On September 1, 2005, Plaintiff served a motion for leave to amend its complaint, which the County opposed (proposed amended complaint alleged takings based in part on events that occurred since the case was filed and added the "Airstrip Parcel" owned by Good consisting of 54 acres). On October 14, 2005, Plaintiff filed an Amended Motion for Leave to Amend and Supplement Complaint; the County filed its response on October 17, 2005. Plaintiff's motion was heard on October 17, 2005; the Court granted the motion to amend and supplement as to all property that was previously the subject of Plaintiff's action, but denied the motion as to the Airstrip Parcel. On November 22, 2005, Monroe County filed a motion to dismiss Plaintiff's Second Amended and Supplemental Complaint based on ripeness grounds. (\$18,526.41 as of October 31, 2005).

**Kalan** - Takings claim filed as to residential property in Cahill Pines & Palms subdivision for failure to obtain ROGO allocation in 4 year period. Based on County's motion to dismiss, the parties agreed to

entry of an order holding the case in abeyance while Plaintiff seeks a beneficial use determination, as required to exhaust available administrative remedies and ripen the case for judicial review. On June 24, 2004, the Court entered an order requiring the County to render a beneficial use determination as to subject property within 90 days. On September 21, 2004, the Court granted the County's motion for an extension of time, extending the deadline for the County to render a beneficial use determination until January 20, 2005. On October 26, 2004, a beneficial use hearing was held before the Special Master. The County filed another motion to extend the deadline for the rendering of a beneficial use determination, which remains pending. On March 4, 2005, the Special Master rendered a proposed denial of beneficial use, which was adopted by the BOCC on June 15, 2005. (\$2,855.77 as of October 31, 2005).

### Other Matters

**O'Daniel and Hills v. Monroe County** - Petitioners filed a vested rights claim in Circuit Court on March 13, 2002. Petitioners also appealed finding of Code Enforcement Special Master that they were conducting a commercial business on the subject, which is in a residential zoning district, without having first obtained a special use permit. The Court affirmed the Special Master's finding and order. The vested rights claim went to bench trial on May 25, 2004. On October 7, 2004, the Court entered its final judgment in favor of Petitioners. The Court held that Appellants/Petitioners have vested rights to maintain a mixed residential/commercial structure on the subject property, and to use the subject property for both residential and commercial office purposes. The relief granted to Petitioners is relatively narrow compared to the relief sought. The Court, for example, held that (1) any application for a change in commercial use is subject to current regulations regarding non-conforming structures and uses, and (2) the commercial portion of the structure must substantially comply with current standard building, electrical, mechanical and plumbing codes before a certificate of occupancy is issued. The Court did not vacate its prior order affirming the Code Enforcement Special Master order.

On November 4, 2004, Petitioners filed motions to tax costs and for attorney's fees pursuant to § 57.105, Fla. Stat. On November 11, 2004, the County filed a motion to strike the motion for attorney's fees for Petitioners' failure to comply with the procedural requirements of § 57.105. On February 9, 2005, the Court entered its order granting the County's motion. On March 7, 2005, Appellants/Petitioners filed a notice of appeal as to the order granting the County's motion to strike. Appellants/Petitioners filed their Initial Brief with the Third District Court of Appeal on June 6, 2005, arguing that § 57.105 is constitutionally infirm because the legislature may not enact rules of court practice and procedure. The County filed its Answer Brief on August 16, 2005. Oral argument was heard on October 19, 2005. On December 7, 2005, the Third District Court of Appeal rendered its opinion affirming the trial court's order in favor of the County. (\$42,782.73 as of October 31, 2005).

**Industrial Communications & Electronics v. Monroe County** - I.C.E. filed action against Monroe County in federal court alleging wireless tower moratoria violated the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution. The district court granted the county's motion to dismiss on grounds of res judicata/collateral estoppel (claims were identical to those brought in state court action and plaintiff failed to reserve federal claims therein). I.C.E. appealed the decision to the 11th Circuit.

On May 27, 2005, the 11th Circuit vacated the judgment of the district court, but remanded with instruction to dismiss the complaint for lack of jurisdiction. A proposed order was submitted by the

County to the district court on June 28, 2005. (\$18,966.92 as of October 31, 2005).

**Johnson** - Writ of Mandamus challenging Director of Planning's determination that application for "boundary determination" by alleged error requires zoning map amendment application. Applicant applied for boundary determination based on allegation that BOCC previously adopted change in zoning. Director's determination was based on review of records failing to show any error or prior consideration of such zoning change. Director rejected application and informed owner to properly file for zoning map amendment. (Boundary determination may be placed on BOCC agenda without the public notice required for a zoning change). Pursuant to oral argument, Monroe County agreed to re-process application for denial or approval (application was previously returned as incomplete) and Plaintiff may appeal as provided by the Monroe County Code if denied. On May 26, 2005, opposing counsel submitted a proposed final judgment for the County's consideration. On August 30, 2005, a proposed stipulated settlement agreement was submitted to opposing counsel for consideration. (\$2,249.62 as of October 31, 2005).

**Sierra Club, et al. v. Department of Community Affairs & Miami-Dade County (Monroe County & City of Homestead as Intervenor)** - On October 10, 2002, the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners approved Ordinance No. 02-198, which amends the Land Use Element and Transportation Element of Miami Dade's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan to change the designation of Krome Avenue from a "Minor Roadway" (2 lanes) to a "Major Roadway" (3 or more lanes). On January 10, 2003, Petitioners filed a petition for formal administrative hearing to challenge DCA's finding that this and other amendments to the Miami-Dade's Plan are "in compliance" as defined in section 163.3184(1)(b), Fla. Stat. On December 16, 2003, the ALJ granted Monroe County's petition to intervene. On March 22, 2004, Miami-Dade filed a motion to relinquish jurisdiction to DCA. In December 2004, the parties reached a tentative settlement agreement, but the Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County formally rejected the agreement on March 1, 2005. On April 11, 2005, City of Homestead filed its petition for leave to intervene (in support of Miami-Dade); DOAH granted the petition on May 4, 2005. On May 11, 2005, Petitioners filed their response to Miami-Dade's motion to relinquish jurisdiction; the response was adopted by Monroe County. On June 3, 2005, DCA filed its response to Miami-Dade's motion to relinquish jurisdiction, asking the ALJ to deny the motion. On July 21, 2005, DCA withdrew its response and joined in Miami-Dade's motion to relinquish jurisdiction and to issue a recommended order. On August 22, 2005, the ALJ denied Miami-Dade's motion to relinquish jurisdiction. The final hearing was held September 21-23 and 27-29, at which Timothy McGarry testified for Monroe County. The parties are awaiting the ALJ's decision. (Legal services are being provided by Morgan & Hendrick without charge to Monroe County).